Blood Hunter 2024

Well, I suppose it's late 2025, but better late than never, right?

Hello, I'm Thomas, and a couple years back (while the 2024 UA was being released) I released a homebrew rework of Matthew Mercer's Blood Hunter class. If you've already read that, you can find a lot of this same preamble there, with a few changes as my perspective as a game designer has grown. You'll also read how I've adapted the Blood Hunter to the 2024 rules change, which will be very exciting!

First, a Little Trigger Warning

Anyone who's seen Mercer's Blood Hunter knows what they're getting into, but for those who don't, the Blood Hunter deals with blood - like, a lot; like, it's their whole thing - and the mechanics of the class also have strong themes of self-harm. If that doesn't bother you, that's great, life is good. If it does, proceed with caution.

And now, without further ado, let's talk about design philosophy.

What *Is* a Blood Hunter?

Here is Mercer's original concept for the Blood Hunter, as I understand it: Blood Hunters are members of a small, esoteric clade of supernatural hunters who have infused their essences - which means something between soul and blood - with the essences of various creatures of the night in order to stave off the powers of darkness. They were haunted, tragic heroes who gave their souls over to the forces of evil in order to resist the darkness and protect civilization.

This is, in my experience, exceedingly exciting and evocative. D&D players **love** Byronic heroes; they love playing characters who struggle with the dark powers that give them strength; they love the chiaroscuro of characters who aim at good but whose very nature drives them toward evil. It makes for characters who are full of drama and intrigue and internal conflict, and that's just fun and exciting to play at the table.

Can it get a little cringe? If you allow it to, for sure, but ultimately it's a fantasy that a lot of people seem drawn to. I think Mercer's concept was very sexy. But when it came to the execution...

So Why Fix what Isn't Broken?

Because it *was* broken. In fact, "broken" is a funny choice of words, because the class in terms of power level was absolutely terrible. Obviously no one likes broken homebrew, and so it seems better to aim low than high in terms of strength, but most of Mercer's homebrew PC options leave much to be desired even compared to their PH14 counterparts, let alone 5e expansions like Tasha's which arguably set the power level for PH24.

Blood Hunter was no exception. It was profoundly weak, but more worrisome than that, its abilities seemed *unfocused*: there were a lot of disparate abilities that seemed to pen in the kind of character you could play as a blood hunter. For example, at level 9 they get a feature called Grim Psychometry, which gives them a bonus to relevant Intelligence checks and potentially allows them to witness past events relating to an object's history. At level 10, they get Dark Augmentation, a feature that gives them extra speed and better physical saving throws. These two abilities are *very* different, and that's the mark of a class that's just doing too much. Blood Hunters are supernatural hunters, essence manipulators, and are infused with monster DNA. That's a whole lotta ground to cover in one class, and that can seriously limit the kinds of characters that make sense within the class.

So Pick a Vibe

Most classes in the 24PH have a particular conceit that makes them what they are, often exemplified by a cornerstone ability. Barbarians rage. Wizards have their spellbooks. Rangers explore and cast hunter's mark. Mercer's Blood Hunter doesn't *quite* have this; the lv1 features of the class are Hunter's Bane, which helps players track and know things about creatures of the night - very "OG Favored Enemy" - and Blood Maledict, which gave the character access to blood curses.

In the interest of putting all of the flavor in one place and also giving players access to (let's face it) the coolest ability first, I chose two cornerstone abilities to form the mechanical and flavorful heart of the class: Blood Curses (which I renamed Blood Edicts, because I made some of them buffs) and more importantly, the Crimson Rite. That gives us two features that focus on Blood Hunters as being essence manipulators first and foremost, with how they are able to manipulate their essence and why they choose to now free to be character choices.

Thank You, Matthew Mercer

Now I just spent a *lot* of time dogging on Mercer about how his creation turned out and I wanted to stress that he is responsible not only for forging a conceptual identity worthy of an entirely new class – which, given the flavorful breadth of the classes in 5e, is a real achievement – he also seems like a generally great dude and the D&D community owes a lot to his GMing and the extraordinary group of voice actors who've played alongside him. He's brought Dungeons and Dragons into the mainstream in a way that we could scarcely have thought possible before, and he gets the props he deserves for that in my opinion, but it's always good to acknowledge an inspiration. I, myself, discovered my passion for TTRPGs through listening to Critical Role, and my criticism of Mercer's work on many of his PC options should be taken with the understanding that I have nothing but respect for him as a person and as a game master. He seriously does great work.

Thank You, Kaiburr

The style and formatting for this is fully ripped from a user called Kaiburr Kath-Hound; enormous, titanic props to them for putting all this together, I could never have done such a thing. Like most game designers, I stand on the shoulders of graphic designers!

This is Version 1.1

If you want to look up an older version of this brew, you certainly may. Many changes were made in the meantime, and I'll be keeping up with them in the change log at the end of the brew. If you're curious as to what about it I saw fit to change and why, I've got the receipts for you, one amateur designer to another!

Feedback!

If the mood strikes you to give me some feedback, feel free - I'd love to hear your thoughts!

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This Concludes the Preamble

I'll have design notes at the end of the class description that will illuminate some of the changes I've made from Mercer's Blood Hunter as well as from my own initial design, but for now, let's get to the class!

Core Blood Hunter Traits

Primary Ability	Dexterity and Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma
Hit Point Die	D10 per Blood Hunter level
Saving Throw Proficiencies	Constitution and Intelligence
Skill Proficiencies	*Choose 3:* Acrobatics, Arcana, Athletics, Insight, Investigation, Medicine, Nature, Religion, Stealth, or Survival
Weapon Proficiencies	Simple and Martial weapons
Tool Proficiencies	Alchemist's Supplies
Armor Training	Light and Medium armor and Shields
Starting Equipment	*Choose A or B:* (A) Leather Armor, 2 Daggers, Shortsword, Light Crossbow, 20 Bolts, Quiver, Alchemist's Supplies, Explorer's Pack, and 9 GP; or (B) 120 GP

When creatures of the night reign unchecked; when darkness grows so thick and deep that it threatens to choke out the light; when horrors unspeakable rise to torment the helpless, the Blood Hunter is the last line of defense.

Blood Hunters are masters at manipulating their essence. Many become monster hunters, hiding in the shadows, believing that their dark powers make them little better than the horrors they slay; others take pride in their gifts, boasting of the agonizing rituals and rigorous training they've endured in pursuit of their craft.

Whether they hide their gifts in the darkness or become a beacon of light, the Blood Hunter is nonetheless defined by their sacrifice: the sacrifice of their vitality in their Blood Hexes and the Crimson Rite, and the sacrifice of their humanity for the cause that they serve.

Becoming a Blood Hunter...

As a Level 1 Character

- Gain all the traits in the Core Blood Hunter Traits table.
- Gain the Blood Hunter's level 1 features, which are listed in the Blood Hunter Features table.

As a Multiclass Character

- Gain the following traits from the Core Blood Hunter Traits table: Hit Point Die, proficiency with Martial weapons, proficiency in one skill of your choice from the Blood Hunter's skill list, and training with Light and Medium armor and Shields.
- Gain the Blood Hunter's level 1 features, which are listed in the Blood Hunter Features table.

Blood Hunter Class Features

As a Blood Hunter, you gain the following class features when you reach the specified Blood Hunter levels. These features are listed in the Blood Hunter Features table.

Level 1: Blood Maledict

Rites of magic which are highly dangerous, long guarded, and profoundly esoteric have empowered you to seize control of your essence - your very life's blood - and allowed you to utilize it as a weapon against your enemies, or a boon to your allies.

Hemocraft Ability. Choose your Hemocraft ability from among Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. If you choose Intelligence, it's likely that you learned to harness essence through intense of alchemy or esoterica. If you choose Wisdom, you may simply have a strong, intuitive sense for the essences of living beings. If you choose Charisma, perhaps your sense of self is so unshakable that essence itself obey you.

Hemocraft Die. Your Hemocraft is a d4. This die changes as you gain Blood Hunter levels, as shown in the Hemocraft Die column of the Blood Hunter Features table.

Sacrifice of Blood. When a Blood Hunter feature calls for you to take damage equal to one or more rolls of your Hemocraft Die, that damage cannot be prevented in any way.

Hemocraft Save DC. Some Blood Hunter features require a target to make a saving throw. The save DC equals 8 plus your Hemocraft Ability modifier and Proficiency Bonus.

Level 1: Crimson Rite

A rite of hemocraft allows you to infuse your attacks with elemental energy. As a bonus action, choose any number of weapons on your person and/or unarmed strikes. You take damage equal to one roll of your Hemocraft Die for each weapon chosen this way (including unarmed strikes).

For each weapon, choose a damage type from among Cold, Fire, Lightning, Necrotic, Poison, Psychic, or Radiant. Until you finish a rest, your attacks using those weapons deal additional damage of the chosen type equal to one roll of your Hemocraft Die.

Level 1: Weapon Mastery

Your training with weapons allows you to use the mastery properties of two kinds of weapons of your choice with which you have proficiency, such as Longswords and Longbows.

Whenever you finish a Long Rest, you can change the kinds of weapons you chose. For example, you could switch to using the mastery properties of Daggers and Hand Crossbows.

The Blood Hunter

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Class Features	Hemocraft Die	Blood Edicts Known	Blood Edict Uses
1st	+2	Blood Maledict, Crimson Rite, Weapon Mastery	d4	—	—
2nd	+2	Fighting Style, Blood Edict	d4	2	2
3rd	+2	Blood Hunter Subclass	d6	2	2
4th	+2	Ability Score Improvement	d6	3	2
5th	+3	Extra Attack	d6	3	3
6th	+3	Rite of Restoration	d8	3	3
7th	+3	Impenetrable Essence	d8	4	3
8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement	d8	4	3
9th	+4	Subclass Feature	d8	4	3
10th	+4	Swift Recovery	d10	4	4
11th	+4	Waves of Crimson	d10	4	4
12th	+4	Ability Score Improvement	d10	5	4
13th	+5	Subclass Feature	d10	5	4
14th	+5	Resilient Essence	d10	5	4
15th	+5	Agonizing Power	d10	5	4
16th	+5	Ability Score Improvement	d10	6	4
17th	+6	Subclass Feature	d12	6	4
18th	+6	Warrior's Edict	d12	6	5
19th	+6	Epic Boon	d12	7	5
20th	+6	Sanguine Mastery	d12	7	5

Level 2: Fighting Style

You gain a Fighting Style feat of your choice (see chapter 5 for feats). Instead of choosing one of those feats, you can choose the option below.

Hemocraft Adept. Once per turn when you roll one or more Hemocraft Dice, you can reroll one of them, and you must use the new roll.

Level 2: Blood Edict

You can manipulate the essences of others as deftly as your own, amplifying your allies' strengths or bending enemies to your will through works of hemocraft. You learn two edicts from the "Blood Edict" section later in this class's description.

You can use this feature twice. You regain one of its expended uses when you finish a Short Rest, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest.

When you reach certain Blood Hunter levels, you gain more uses of this feature, as shown in the Blood Edict Uses column of the Blood Hunter Features table.

Amplifying Edicts. You can amplify blood edicts by taking damage equal to one roll of your Hemocraft Die.

Replacing and Learning Edicts. Whenever you gain a Blood Hunter level, you can replace one of your edicts with another one for which you qualify.

Level 3: Blood Hunter Subclass

You gain a Blood Hunter subclass of your choice. The Bloodletter, Darkstalker, Martyr, and Sanguinist subclasses are detailed after this class's description. A subclass is a specialization that grants you features at certain Blood Hunter levels. For the rest of your career, you gain each of your subclass's features that are of your Blood Hunter level or lower.

Level 4: Ability Score Improvement

You gain the Ability Score Improvement feat (see chapter 5) or another feat of your choice for which you qualify. You gain this feature again at Blood Hunter levels 8, 12, and 16.

Level 5: Extra Attack

You can attack twice instead of once whenever you take the Attack action on your turn.

Level 6: Rite of Restoration

You can perform an esoteric rite for 1 minute. At the end of it, you may expend a number of Hit Point Dice up to your Proficiency Bonus. For each hit die rolled, regain a number of Hit Points equal to the roll's total plus your Constitution modifier. Once you use this feature, you can't do so again until you finish a Long Rest.

Level 7: Impenetrable Essence

Your control of your own vitality shuts out those who would interfere with it. Your maximum hit points can't be reduced.

Level 10: Swift Recovery

Your regular use of your essence has left you able to recover with remarkable speed. At the end of each Short Rest, regain up to two expended hit dice that you did not expend during that rest and your Exhaustion level, if any, decreases by 1.

Level 11: Waves of Crimson

Your Crimson Rite and Blood Edicts you invoke that deal damage each deal additional damage equal to one roll of your Hemocraft Die.

Level 14: Resilient Essence

When you fail a saving throw, you can roll your Hemocraft Die and add the result to the saving throw, potentially turning the failure into a success. If you succeed on the saving throw, you take damage equal to one roll of your Hemocraft Die.

Level 15: Agonizing Power

When you roll Hemocraft dice, you can channel your essence to amplify your Hemocraft until the turn ends. When you do, you treat each Hemocraft Die you roll this turn as having rolled the highest possible result, and take damage equal to two rolls of your Hemocraft Die.

Once you use this feature, you can't do so again until you finish a Short or Long Rest.

Level 18: Warrior's Edict

Once on each of your turns when your Crimson Rite deals damage to a creature, you can immediately use a Blood Edict targeting that creature as part of the same action.

Level 19: Epic Boon

You gain an Epic Boon feat (see chapter 5) or another feat of your choice for which you qualify. Boon of Recovery is recommended.

Level 20: Sanguine Mastery

Your essence has grown impossibly potent and resilient. Your Constitution and your Hemocraft ability scores increase by 4, to a maximum of 25.

Blood Edict Options

Blood Edict options appear in alphabetical order.

Bleeding Eyes

When a creature you can see within 30 feet hits another creature with an attack, you can use your reaction to roll your Hemocraft Die and subtract the result from the attack, potentially turning the hit into a miss.

Amplify. Until your next turn, the creature subtracts one roll of your Hemocraft Die from every attack roll it makes.

Blood Bind

As a bonus action, you can wind a knot in an enemy's essence. Choose a creature within 30 feet. That creature's speed is halved and it can't take reactions until your next turn.

Amplify. The target must succeed on a Strength saving throw or have the Restrained condition until your next turn.

Burst of Speed

When you move, you can push your body to its limits. When you do, your speed increases by 20 feet this turn.

Amplify. Your movement ignores difficult terrain and doesn't provoke attacks of opportunity this turn.

Commandeer Corpse

When a creature you can see within 30 feet is reduced to 0 hit points or less, you can use your reaction to channel its last gasps of strength to your ends. The creature immediately makes one weapon attack against a creature of your choice that you can see if able.

Amplify. You can force the creature to move up to half its speed before it attacks.

Empower

When a creature you can see within 30 feet attempts a saving throw or a skill check that uses Strength, you can fortify that creature's essence with supernatural power. Add one roll of your Hemocraft Die to that d20 test.

Amplify. In addition, when a creature you can see within 30 feet initiates a grapple against another creature, you can roll your Hemocraft Die and subtract it from the saving throw of the creature being grappled.

Flood of Crimson

When you damage a creature with your Crimson Rite, you can push a flood of vital energy into your rite for the turn. When you do, roll your Hemocraft Die an additional time and add it to the damage dealt by your Crimson Rite this turn.

Amplify. You can amplify this edict at the end of your turn to extend its effect until the end of your next turn.

Gut Wrench

As a bonus action, choose a creature within 30 feet. That creature must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or have the Poisoned condition until the end of your next turn.

Amplify. The target falls prone.

Nimbleness

When a creature you can see within 30 feet attempts a Dexterity saving throw or a skill check that uses Dexterity, you can manipulate that creature to be more malleable. Add one roll of your Hemocraft Die to that d20 test.

Amplify. In addition, when a creature you can see takes damage from falling, you can have it instead take no damage.

Restore Essence

As a bonus action, you can restore and rejuvenate another creature's essence. Choose another creature within 30 feet and end one condition on it: Blinded, Deafened, Paralyzed, or Poisoned.

Amplify. The creature regains additional hit points equal to two rolls of your Hemocraft Die.

Blood Hunter Subclasses

A Blood Hunter subclass is a specialization that grants you features at certain Blood Hunter levels, as specified in the subclass. This section presents the Bloodletter, Darkstalker, Martyr, and Sanguinist subclasses.

Bloodletter

Leave the battlefield flowing with blood.

Happy to spill their own blood alongside their enemies, the Bloodletter's pain may not be their own gain, but it can certainly spell the ruin of their enemies.

Level 3: Boiling Blood

When you take damage on your turn, creatures of your choice within 10 feet of you take damage of any damage type that can be dealt by your Crimson Rite equal to one roll of your Hemocraft Die. Once you use this feature, you can't do so again until your next turn.

In addition, when you take damage on another creature's turn, creatures of your choice within 10 feet of you take damage of any damage type that can be dealt by your Crimson Rite equal to one roll of your Hemocraft Die. Once you use this feature, you can't do so again until your next turn.

At the end of your turn, you can deal damage to yourself equal to one roll of your Hemocraft Die.

Level 9: Frenzy

When another creature deals damage to you, you can use your reaction to make one attack against the target with a weapon or unarmed strike.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Hemocraft modifier. You regain one of its expended uses when you finish a Short Rest, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest.

Level 13: Crimson Cloak

When you move, you can extend your Crimson Rite to wreath you in power. When you do, take damage equal to one roll of your Hemocraft die. This turn, your Speed increases by 20 feet, and whenever you move within 5 feet of a creature, that creature takes damage of any type your Crimson Rite can deal equal to two rolls of your Hemocraft die. A creature can take this damage only once each turn.

Once you use this feature, you can't do so again until you finish a Short or Long Rest.

Level 13: Scorching Blood

The damage of your Boiling Blood increases to two rolls of your Hemocraft Die.

Level 17: Burnout

You have learned to strain the limits of your body without destroying it entirely. When you take the Attack action while you're bloodied, you can take an additional attack as part of that action. If you do, take damage equal to two rolls of your Hemocraft Die after the attack.

Darkstalker

Harness your Hemocraft to control the beast within.

A deep hunger thunders inside you, and you *must* mind its call.

Level 3: Claw and Fang

Claw and Fang. When you deal damage with an Unarmed Strike, you can deal Bludgeoning, Piercing, or Slashing damage equal to a roll of your Hemocraft Die, instead of the strike's normal damage.

Dexterous Attacks. You can use your Dexterity modifier in place of your Strength modifier for the attack and damage rolls of your Unarmed Strikes. In addition, when you use the Grapple or Shove option of your Unarmed Strike, you can use your Dexterity modifier instead of your Strength modifier to determine the save DC.

Unarmored Defense. While you aren't wearing armor or wielding a shield, your Armor Class is equal to 10 plus your Dexterity and Hemocraft modifiers.

Level 3: Predator's Instinct

Once each turn, when a creature takes damage from your Crimson Rite, you can designate that creature as your Prey for the next hour. You have advantage on the first attack you make against your Prey each turn.

In addition, you can take the Search action to ascertain information about your Prey as a Bonus Action. You have Advantage on any ability checks you make as part of that action.

Level 9: Unnatural Agility

Powerful Claws. You gain a Climb Speed equal to your Speed.

Powerful Strides. Your Speed increases by 10 feet while you aren't wearing Heavy armor, and you can make a running Long Jump or High Jump after moving only 5 feet.

Level 9: Honed Claws

Once each turn, when you hit a creature with an Unarmed Strike, choose one:

Brutalize. That creature must succeed on a Constitution saving throw, falling prone on a failed save.

Frustrate. The next attack you make against that creature before the end of your next turn has advantage.

Shove. That creature is pushed up to 10 feet straight away from you.

Level 13: Dreadful Cry

When you reduce your Prey to 0 hit points, you can unleash a cry that fills surrounding creatures with dread. Creatures of your choice within 30 feet that can see or hear you must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or be Frightened of you until the end of your next turn.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a Short or Long Rest.

Level 17: Prey Drive

Whenever a creature you can perceive moves away from you, you can use your reaction to move up to twice your speed toward that creature and make an Unarmed Strike against it.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Hemocraft Ability modifier. You regain one of its expended uses when you finish a Short Rest, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest.

Martyr

Give of your own essence for those around you.

To sacrifice one's very lifeblood for the sake of others: for some it's foolishness; for others it's a vice; for a few, it's an obligation. Gifted with Hemocraft, Martyrs use that gift to empower others... at their own expense.

Level 3: Gift of Agony

When you take damage on your turn, restore Hit Points equal to one roll of your Hemocraft Die plus your Hemocraft modifier to other creatures of your choice within 10 feet of you. Once you use this feature, you can't do so again until your next turn.

In addition, when you take damage on another creature's turn, restore Hit Points equal to one roll of your Hemocraft Die plus your Hemocraft modifier to other creatures of your choice within 10 feet of you. Once you use this feature, you can't do so again until your next turn.

At the end of your turn, you can deal damage to yourself equal to one roll of your Hemocraft Die.

Level 9: Surpassing Clemency

Your healing bestows blessings that surpass mere physical restoration. When you restore hit points to one or more creatures, choose one of them on whom to bestow one of the following blessings:

Blessing of Fortitude. It gains Temporary Hit Points equal to one roll of your Hemocraft Die plus your Hemocraft modifier.

Blessing of Strength. It adds one roll of your Hemocraft Die to any one damage roll it makes before your next turn. ***Blessing of Wisdom.*** It adds one roll of your Hemocraft Die to any one ability check it makes before your next turn.

Level 13: Brink of Death

When you restore Hit Points to a Bloodied creature, add your Blood Hunter level to the number of Hit Points restored and bestow an additional Blessing on that creature.

Level 13: Gift of Abundance

The healing of your Gift of Agony increases to two rolls of your Hemocraft die plus your Hemocraft Modifier.

Level 17: Martyr's Kindness

At the end of your turn, you can choose a creature within 30 feet of you. That creature regains Hit Points equal to half its Hit Point maximum, then you drop to 0 hit points.

Once you use this feature, you can't do so again until you finish a Long Rest.

Sanguinist

Wield the power of essence.

Masters of essence, Sanguinists use their blood magics to bend enemies to their will and fortify their allies.

Level 3: Hemomancy Burst

When you invoke a Blood Edict, choose one of the following options:

Essence Rend. One affected creature takes Necrotic damage equal to one roll of your Hemocraft Die plus your Hemocraft modifier. ***Mend Soul.*** One affected creature regains hit points equal to two rolls of your Hemocraft Die plus your Hemocraft modifier.

Level 3: Blade Tether

Wherever your lifeblood falls, a fraction of your power moves within it. Whenever you attack with a weapon or unarmed strike that bears your Crimson Rite, you can use your Hemocraft modifier for the attack and damage rolls instead of using Strength or Dexterity.

Level 9: Sanguine Sage

When you finish a Short Rest, you can regain all expended uses of your Blood Edict feature. Once you do, you can't do so again until you finish a long rest.

In addition, when you finish a long rest, you can replace one Blood Edict you know with another you can learn.

Level 13: Crimson Tether

Creatures damaged by your Crimson Rite this turn have disadvantage on saving throws made against blood edicts you invoke.

Level 13: Sanguine Explosion

The damage of your Essence Rend increases to two rolls of your Hemocraft Die plus your Hemocraft modifier. The healing of your Mend Soul increases to four rolls of your Hemocraft Die plus your Hemocraft modifier.

Level 17: Master of Hemocraft

You learn one Blood Edict of your choice from the "Greater Edicts" section later in this subclass's description, which doesn't count against the number of Blood Edicts you know. You can change which Greater Edict you know when you finish a Long Rest. Once you invoke a Greater Edict, you can't do so again until you finish a Long Rest.

Greater Edicts

Greater Edict options appear in alphabetical order.

Frozen Blood

As an action, choose a creature you can see within 30 feet. It must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or be Paralyzed for 1 minute. At the end of each of their turns, it repeats its save, ending the effect on a success. On a successful save, the target's speed is halved and it has the Poisoned condition until its next turn ends.

Amplify. You can amplify this edict any number of times. For each time you amplify it, choose an additional target.

Shattered Bones

As an action, choose a creature you can see within 30 feet. Whenever that creature takes damage before the end of your next turn, it takes additional damage equal to one roll of your Hemocraft Die.

Amplify. You can amplify this edict any number of times. Deal Necrotic damage to the target equal to one roll of your Hemocraft Die for each time you amplified it.

Writhing Muscles

As an action, you can wrack an enemy with agony. Choose a creature you can see within 30 feet, and it suffers the following effects until your next turn ends:

- For every 10 feet the target moves, it takes damage equal to one roll of your Hemocraft Die.
- Each time the target takes an action, it takes damage equal to one roll of your Hemocraft Die.

Amplify. You can amplify this edict any number of times. For each time you amplified it, reduce the target's speed by 5 feet and deal Necrotic damage to it equal to one roll of your Hemocraft Die.

Change Log

A lot happens in a design process; here are some changes. One more shoutout to Matthew Mercer; he seems to be not only an excellent content creator but also just an awesome dude.

Vibe Changes

I talk about this a bit at the top of the class: the flavor of the Blood Hunter was initially exceedingly narrow imo. It needed to be broaded out to represent a full class, rather than a Ranger subclass, which is essentially what Mercer's Blood Hunter was.

In practice, this meant that I ended up rewriting all of the flavor text - not only of Mercer's blood hunter, but even compared to the original version of my homebrew.

Crimson Rite Changes

A lot of small changes to this feature.

First, you can now crimson rite multiple weapons at once. Little quality of life improvement for my dual wielders out there.

Second, crimson rite on unarmed strikes. I'm a sucker for unarmed builds - especially non-Monk unarmed builds, and that shows even more egregiously in the old rework than the new.

Third, no more learning individual damage types: it seemed like a lot of bookkeeping for no reason. Damage types aren't remotely so strong that they need to be level-locked or restricted, and there's no flavorful reason to restrict it either.

Blood Curse Changes

So yeah, I renamed blood curses again. Using the word hex instead of curse didn't make it feel any less evil-coded, and since the effects that can be unambiguously beneficial, I wanted the name to imply that. Also, its cooldown changed with the cooldowns of other comparable abilities (ie Channel Divinity, Wild Shape, Second Wind) to X/long + 1/short.

Subclass Changes

The Mercer subclasses were all modeled after old Universal moster movies: ghosts and lycanthropes and scientists with their serums which strengthen the drinker, but also exact a toll! Now the subclasses look very different, much more in keeping with typical 5e24 subclasses, represent a flavorful archetype: a considerably broader starting point for a character.

That's It for Mercer

There's not a lot else that I borrowed from Mercer: some ideas are shared but by and large after level 5 these are very different classes. Let's diss my *own* work for a change!

Hunter's Adaptations

A charming idea, but ill-conceived. I was taking a lot of inspo from Pathfinder, 3.5, and SW5e at the time, all of which have tables of customization options built into their classes. Initially this took the same form, where every few levels the blood hunter's player would choose from a long table of "hunter's adaptation" options. That didn't work - that with blood hexes was just too many choices - so it moved into the form you saw it in the first rework, and that version was fine but some of the abilities were pretty botton-up and didn't make much sense. When I started to really distance myself from the whole genetically engineered flavor of the original blood hunter, there was really no reason to keep this ability around.

Considerable Changes to Subclass Structure

My subclasses in the first rework were very formulaic, but in the end I think the brands at lv11 and the transformations at lv17 didn't pull their weight flavorfully. Having custom capstones in particular is a game-changer.

Where's the Order of Inquisitors?

This one makes me a little sad, because I still feel like the blood hunter wants *some* kind of sleuth subclass for the brooding alchemists and grizzled monster slayers out there. Problem is, I've got absolutely no idea what kind of abilities make sense under that archetype. I spent quite a while thinking about it and realized that while trying to crack this one subclass I'd already finished the whole rest of the class. That was enough to tell me that I just don't have it right now.

Where's the Order of the Soulcleft?

The Darkstalker subclass is the new Order of the Soulcleft, but a lot less clunky & bloated at the cost of less flavorful breadth. It still has a bit of reflavor potential but a lot less than before. I think the trade-off is justified: the subclass before was definitely sweet, but in its quest to be customizable a lot of buffs felt pretty bland or even confusing.

Version 1.1

Thus begin the changes I made to bring version 1.0 - the first draft of my 2024 rework of the Blood Hunter - to version 1.1, a slightly more refined version!

First and Most Boring!

The "Die" in "Hemocraft Die" should have been capital, by the standards of existing templating! We see this in the Psionic Energy subclasses as well as the Battle Master. Other strictly templating changes include the following:

Swift Recovery (lv10) now borrows the text from the Ranger's Tireless feature, which serves much the same purpose (and off of which the feature was deliberately modeled; the fact that I didn't recognize this is somewhat embarrassing).

I changed the templating on the Sanguinist's Sanguine Sage feature because I wanted to - and you can't stop me! BAAAAAHAHAHAHAHA!!!

Second and Slightly Less Boring

I'm gonna stop numbering after this one!

In other news, I changed the Fighting Style a little bit. "Reroll lows" where it appeared in 2014 has been replaced with either a minimum roll mechanic (eg Great Weapon Fighting) or a straight reroll, so I changed the fighting style to a reroll. Fun fact: this was the capstone of Mercer's original Blood Hunter! I just put it at level 2!

Something I Considered...

Was switching lvls 7 and 9, putting second subclass features at lv7 and Impenetrable Essence at lv9.

Why did I consider it? I like the idea of subclasses coming online a little faster, and we don't really need the Impenetrable Essence feature at lv7, I think? Are there many CR7 monsters reducing players' max HP?

Why didn't I? Well, I am still open to the idea - the pros are there - but in the end I didn't see the reason in favor as strong enough to make the change. Again, I might do it later, we'll see; for now it is what it is.

Waves of Crimson (Lv11) Tweak

The way that this feature worked prior created considerable memory issues; it just touched too many other abilities that you wouldn't expect, and I had to template higher-level features in a weird way because they scale with it - all in all, it was just a big hassle and I wanted to change it! Crimson Rite and Blood Edicts is simpler to remember.

Enormous Subclass Changes!

I'll get into each subclass in some detail, but each of them was lacking in sauce in v1.0. The one that felt the most fleshed out was the Darkstalker, because that was the one I spent the most time and work on.

The others which needed a lot less reworking, I ended up not doing enough reworking on and they felt a little weak. I spent a bunch of time reworking each one, so they look a lot better now. They also look a lot stronger now, so I'll be keeping an eye on the power level.

The Bloodletter

The most fundamental change to this subclass was the cornerstone. I don't like the idea of Blood Hunters having effifient ways to heal themselves or negate damage. You wanna multiclass and figure it out, that's fine, but I don't think the core fantasy of this class is that you're extremely bulky and survivable. To that end, rather than having the Bloodletter prevent some damage and deal some damage, I made it so that it instead deals lots of damage and prevents no damage! I like the tone that sets for the rest of the subclass.

The Bloodletter's level 9 feature (and this is also true of its partner subclass, the Martyr) got folded into its cornerstone, so it's time to find a new lv9. I consider the one I settled on fine but not groundbreaking.

Lv13, I wanted to make this feature splashier without breaking it, and that means it has to get a cooldown. I already had one X/long + 1/short cooldown within the class, so I opted to make this once per rest, and in exchange you got a little more mileage out of it.

Lv17, this might be literally unchanged, except that it specifies that you take the damage after the attack (which it might have before, I forget). I think this ability is hot, and it makes a sweet capstone.

The Darkstalker

Like I said before, this is the subclass that received the fewest changes. Now that the Waves of Crimson feature isn't weird, the unarmed damage can scale with your hemocraft die, and I wanted it to deal BPS damage, rather than just B.

As to the Prey ability, I put a time limit on it (thank you for pointing out that oversight, Matthew) - since that was a bug and not a feature, I might change it in the v1.0 document. I also changed the advantage on attacks: rather than having advantage after a miss, it gets adv on its first attack each turn, which synergizes with attacks of oppotunity (a subtheme that I like for this class) and avoids the awkward hit-miss-hit-miss pattern that the old feature is susceptible to.

At lv9 there's a new feature! This subclass needed a little more combat and a few more cute ways to interact with it, and so we get Honed Claws.

Dreadful Cry is largely unchanged, and Prey Drive gets a little extra sauce and moves to capstone. The use of "perceive" in this context is, as far as I know, unprecedented in 5e. I could change it to "see" but I wanted to account for other senses, particularly those associated with feral energy: hearing and smell. I may eventually change the ability to have the text "a creature you can see, hear, or smell" but I haven't yet!

The Martyr

I love this subclass so much. It just has such metal vibes.

The cornerstone changed parallel to the Bloodletter's corner stone, except it heals a little more than Bloodletter damages, as is the custom in 5e24, and just like before you've got the lv9 feature folded into the cornerstone, but this time I move the lv13 feature (changed slightly but not that different - I wanted the flavor to be a little more solid) down to 9 and make a new lv13 feature.

My new lv13 feature is adorable, I love it! I wish this class had more points of interaction with the Bloodied condition, but this is a very fine start.

The capstone of the Martyr is largely unchanged; it's quite possibly the sexiest ability I've ever designed.

The Sanguinist

This subclass got a truly unbelievable glow-up.

Little extra damage/heals on its cornerstone, what with adding the hemocraft modifier (and increasing the healing to outpace damage, as is standard in 5e24). The new sanguinist's use of its hemocraft modifier is almost motivic, I really like that!

Now let's get to what I consider the biggest change: Sanguinists get to add their hemo mod to attacks with their crimson rite weapons. This really made the class feel like a different animal to me. It made the vibes come together: instead of using one of the cornerstones of the class (blood edicts) to the detriment of the other (crimson rite), it felt like the two were no longer competing for space.

In any given class, there's generally a generic subclass or two (think Champion Fighter, Berserker Barbarian, Hunter Ranger), and I wanted sanguinist to feel that way: if you want a blood hunter that just does blood hunter stuff all the time, play a sanguinist!

To that end, the Greater Edicts. They pushed the former capstone down to 13th level, and for good reason - those are some STRONG effects!! I had conceived of greater edicts as a high-level main-class feature, rather than belonging to a subclass, but I had enough wildly powerful abilities at my high levels, I decided to shelve 'em. I'm pleased that I finally found a place for them.

I think this subclass has become the strongest in short order, but I don't see a significant problem with that. Every class has standout subclasses.